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The Art of China and Japan

Descriptions of Paintings and Prints

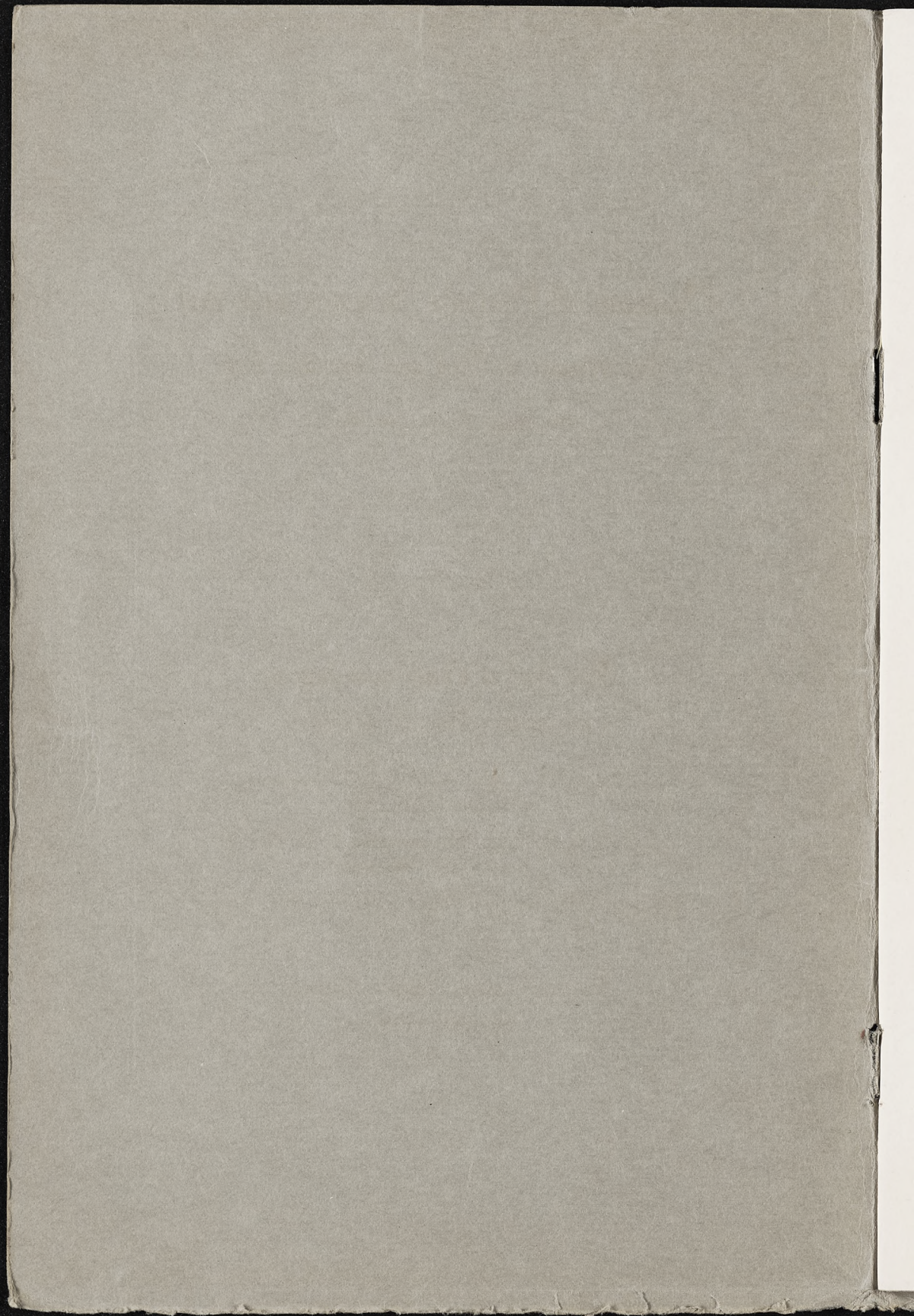
Including Examples of the Aristocratic Art and
of the Democratic Art

From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. T. R. Fleming
of Long Beach, California

With their Explanatory Notes and Introductory Essay

Exposition Park, Los Angeles, California

December, 1919



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TWO SAGES PLAYING CHESS NEAR WATERFALL, by Tanyu, born 1602, died 1674, one of the greatest masters of Japan. This copy is by Kuninobu, a well-known painter.

THE ART OF CHINA AND JAPAN

THE ART OF THE EDUCATED CLASSES

The author of "Samurai Trails" relates that he and his companion, after a hot day's walk on the ancient Tokaido road, took refuge in a Temple garden; but disturbing to its quietude was a sign written in English and nailed to a post. It read: "FOREIGNERS VISITING MUST DISMOUNT HORSES AND NOT RIDE INTO THE TEMPLE." "How the priest of the Temple imagined," comments the author, "that horses were to be urged up these steep steps was a mystery. It created a pride in our alien blood that we were a race thought to be capable of such magic." The author's ironic humor intimates that he realized that the sign was a priestly homily on behavior.

At the threshold of Oriental art the student is apt to ride roughshod into the Temple; the first impression arouses anything but deference. Many of the paintings seem grotesque, others so rudimentary as to be hardly worthy of serious consideration. We cannot, however, step across the threshold without experiencing a great change in our mental attitude. China and Japan have devoted many more centuries than has the Occident to the working out of art problems. There are there as many schools of art as Europe has developed, with master painters esteemed as highly, and master works deemed as priceless, as are those of the western world.

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that in technical ability—in the magic of the brush—the Oriental artist far excels the Occidental. The lore of the brush stroke alone constitutes a wide field of interest. The technique was considered of vital importance, even more important than the subject, for it was held that if the brush gave evidence of uncertainty, lacking firmness or freedom or strength, the spirit of the theme would suffer accordingly.

It has been stated that an infant in Japan receives the first lesson in the command of the brush by the use of the chopsticks, which to employ correctly is no mean performance. Then the child continues as an embryo artist in practicing with his writing brush the forty-seven phonetic signs in two different scripts, followed by the Chinese ideographs, which afford an exacting drill for eye and hand, in balance, accent, curve and shading. If the child was destined to be an artist he was placed in a studio for from ten to eighteen years, and there he was exercised in the art of the arm stroke and the details of the technique. The latter is of singular interest. There were, for example, eighteen ways for painting the garments of human beings; there were special lines for the robes of saints

and court nobles, for war gods and hermits, and for the raiment of geishas and beauties, for ghosts and beggars. Then there was the technique for the bamboo under snow or rain or swayed by the wind, for rocks, mountains, and foliage. Henry P. Bowie, a Californian, spent several years in Japan studying the practice of their art. He has written a work on "The Laws of Japanese Painting," a book of fascinating interest, the only contribution to the subject in any western language. Arthur Morrison, a student of Oriental art, says that where there is one book today on the subject there will be a thousand before fifty years.

Dr. Gunsaulus, of Chicago, talked with Dr. Wilhelm Bode, the noted German art expert, in regard to the American collections of Oriental art. Dr. Bode expressed his amazement at the Chinese and Japanese masterpieces in the Freer collection at Washington and in the Field Museum at Chicago, there being nothing in Europe to match the ancient Chinese and Japanese masterpieces in those museums. "Your people," he said, "don't realize what they have, but they will find out gradually, for the irresistible world current today is toward Oriental art."

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBIT

The Aristocratic Art—the Art of the Educated Classes

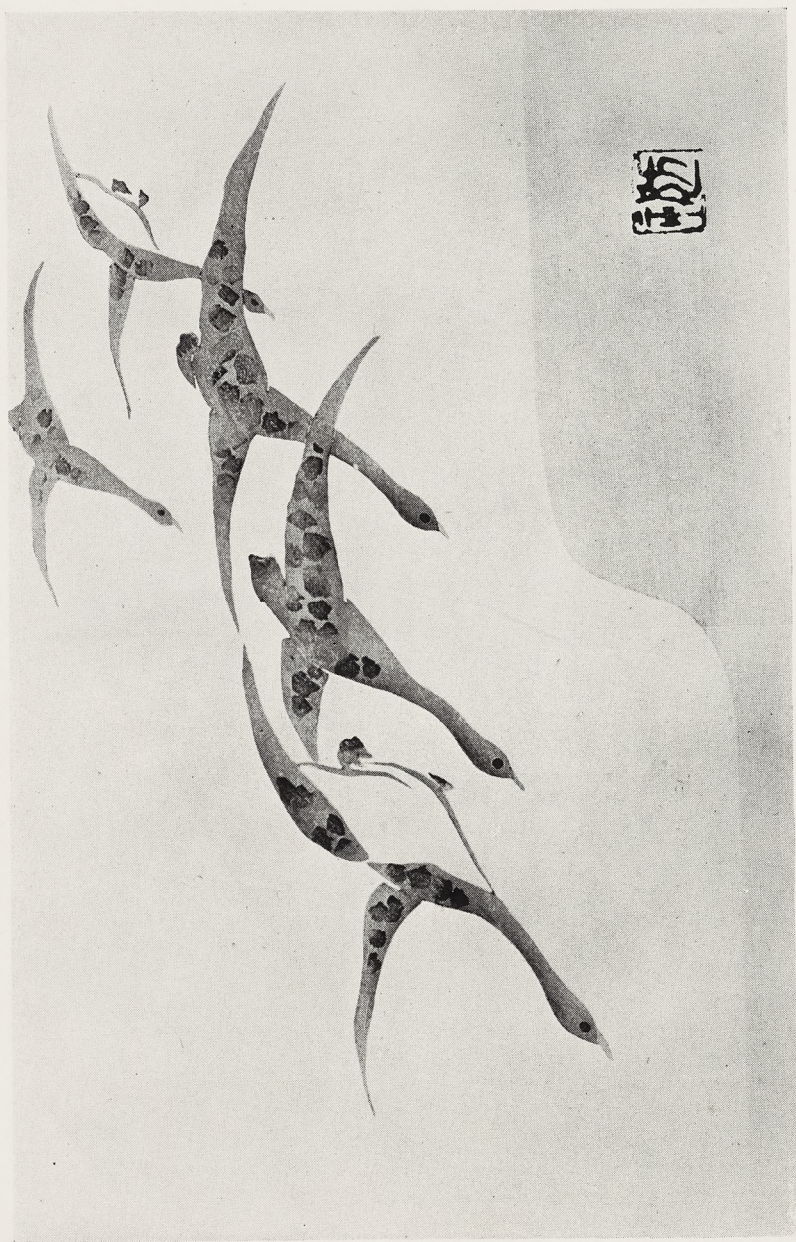
The paintings here shown are from the collections of two members of the American Legation, resident in Japan for many years. Some are originals, others copies of the old masters.

The copies are many of them dated from seventy to eighty years ago. Fenollosa in his "Epochs of Oriental Art" refers to a great wave of interest in the classic art of China which swept Japan seventy or more years ago, and it is presumed the copies are a part of that revival.

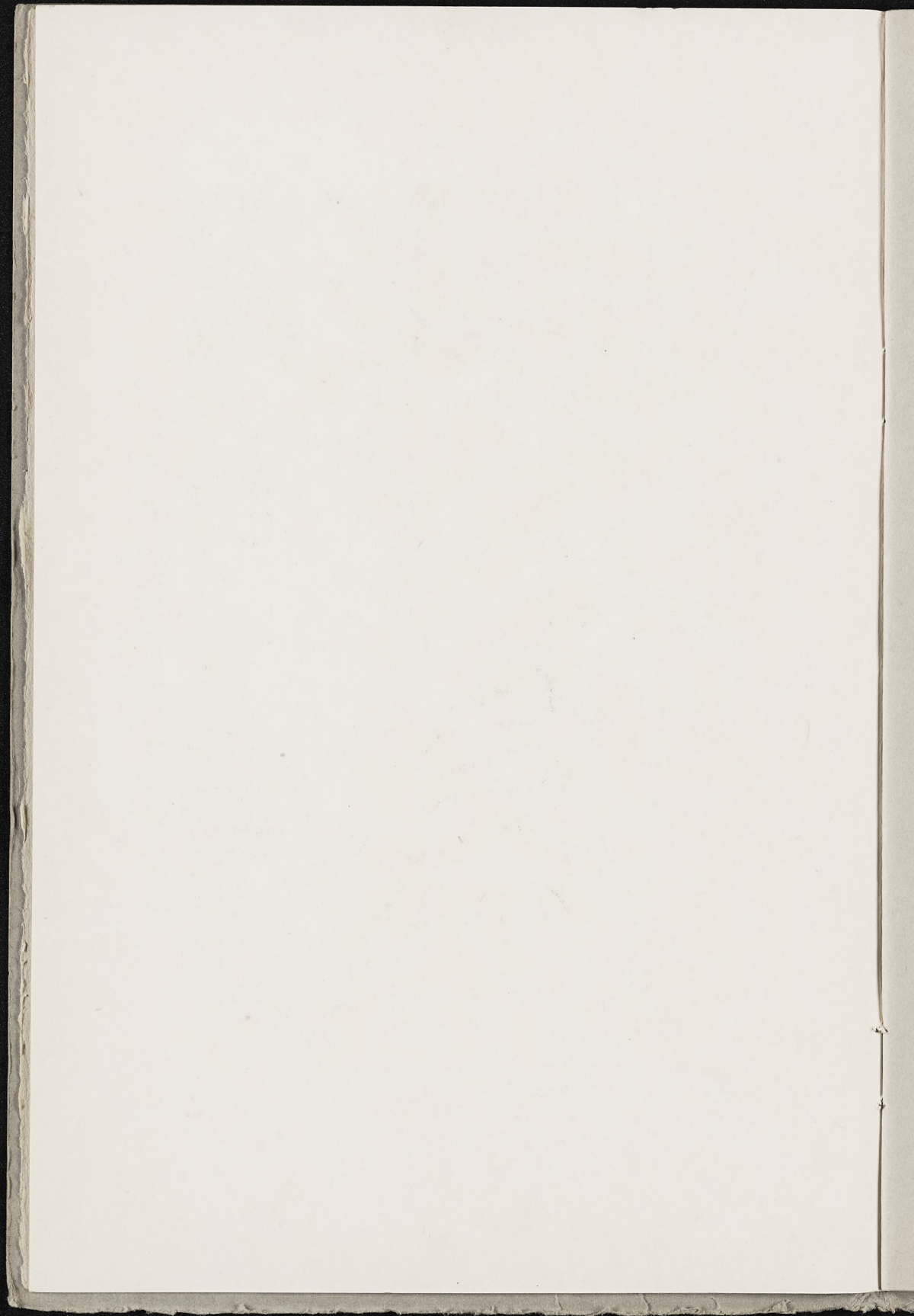
The copies are readily distinguished from the originals. All the former are painted on white paper and have not been exposed to light. The monochromes or one-color examples are typical of a Chinese theory that black, having more tones than any other color, could best express the infinite gradations of nature.

1. To-en-mei, the famous Chinese Poet Returning to His Home, by Kano Yoshinobu of the 18th century.

This poet has been designated the Chinese Wordsworth, owing to his residence at Sekihiki, a favorite lake of the poets, and to his use of nature as a subject. The characteristic Chinese themes "the dew-dropping chrysanthemums, the swaying bamboo, the plum flowers floating on the twilight, the green serenity of the pine," originated with To-en-mei. His greatest poem was "The Return," which the painter of this picture uses as his subject.



THE FLYING GEESE, by Korin, illustrating the "Adwaita Idea," the Buddhist conception of the Universe—the whole in every detail. In this design the single bird repeats the form of the land and sea, and also repeats the formation of the flock.



2. Women and Child under a Cherry Tree, signed Hishikawa Moronobu, born 1625.

Moronobu is known as the Father of Ukiyo-ye and as a famous artist, not only of the popular school, but also of the Kano school.

3. Man with Bow in Hand, Watching the Flight of His Arrow. This is said to be an original sketch by Yosai.

In 1875 the Emperor gave Yosai audience and bestowed on him the title "The First Painter of Japan."

4. Spring View at Omi, by Shigeyoshi.

5. The Bamboo, with poems in two styles of writing, one the famous grass script. The artist Naumei and the two poets sign in collaboration, a frequent occurrence and a symbol of the Chinese saying—"A painting is a poem without words; a poem is a painting with words."

It is difficult for a westerner to comprehend the mind of the Orient in its esteem for a painting of a few stalks of bamboo with no more brush strokes than here represented. The magic of the master's brush stroke and of his representing the spirit of the bamboo is sufficient matter for endless contemplation. Great tomes are written with the bamboo as an art subject.

6. Kwannon, the Spirit of Infinite Mercy, by Ri-riu-min, also known as Li-lung-mien, the greatest religious painter of China. He lived in the Sung dynasty.

The original work was destroyed. This is a copy by Buntai from an old copy by Saiyou, of priceless value. The story of Kwannon is one of the most beautiful of legends and accounts for the reverence the Orient pays to her memory. So pure was her life on earth that the gates of paradise of their own accord opened wide for her entrance, but she declined to enter, saying that she would remain outside until every soul was saved.

7. Famous Sage of China with his Attendants and Symbols, by Setsu, a Chinese artist.

This copy was made in the temple of Ju-san-do in 1835, according to the inscription.

8. A Fisherman in a Boat. The original by Go-sho-sen, a Chinese artist of the Sung dynasty.

It was copied by the great Japanese artist Okio in 1810. This copy was painted by Mankeo in 1830. The fisherman is a symbol of the scholar. In this painting the scholar is in an attitude of reverie. Nature at rest and nature in motion is suggested as the theme, a favorite subject.

9. A Bird Singing as It Flies.

In this picture the artist symbolizes the joyous, soaring spirit leaving the earth behind. The Oriental artist frequently makes subtle association

of birds and flowers. Note the flowers in this instance, the leaves of which repeat the wings of the bird.

10. A Musical Reverie. The original by Tanyu, copied at Bunka by Kawai Saburoji about 1850.

A well-known portrait of a sage sitting under a pine tree at the base of an over-hanging cliff and playing a musical instrument. His auditors show the effects of music; the servant fast asleep, the other listening in profound reverie.

11. A Storm.

A double scene representing the stress of life—the boatman contending with the storm, and the tranquillity of life—the upper part of the picture imaging the peace of a sheltered home. Every landscape of the Orient is symbolic of a state of mind. Amiel's saying, "Every landscape is a state of the soul" is continuously expressed in varying language throughout Oriental art criticism.

12. A Chinese Saint.

One of the interests of this really wonderful and impressive copy is the brush stroke, known as "chasing clouds and water torrent lines." This stroke is employed almost exclusively for the robes of saints. It calls for a continuous wave-like motion of the brush expressing the elemental, the infinite—subjects upon which the saint is absorbed.

13. Two Sages Playing Chess near Waterfall, by Tanyu, one of the greatest masters of the Kano school. This copy is by Kuninnobu.

14. The Country Home of a Sage at Foot of a Waterfall, by Tanyu. He was one of the greatest landscape artists of Japan (1602-1674).

15. A Portrait of Ten-Jin, or Michizane.

Michizane was deified by the Shintoists as the god of calligraphy. He is usually represented with a branch of a plum tree, as under this tree he used to meditate. There is a beautiful legend of the most beautiful plum tree in his garden flying after him when he was banished to the isle Kyushu. Many temples in Japan have been founded in his memory. The brush stroke used in this picture is known as the "broken reed line" intended to inspire awe and used in the portraits of divinities.

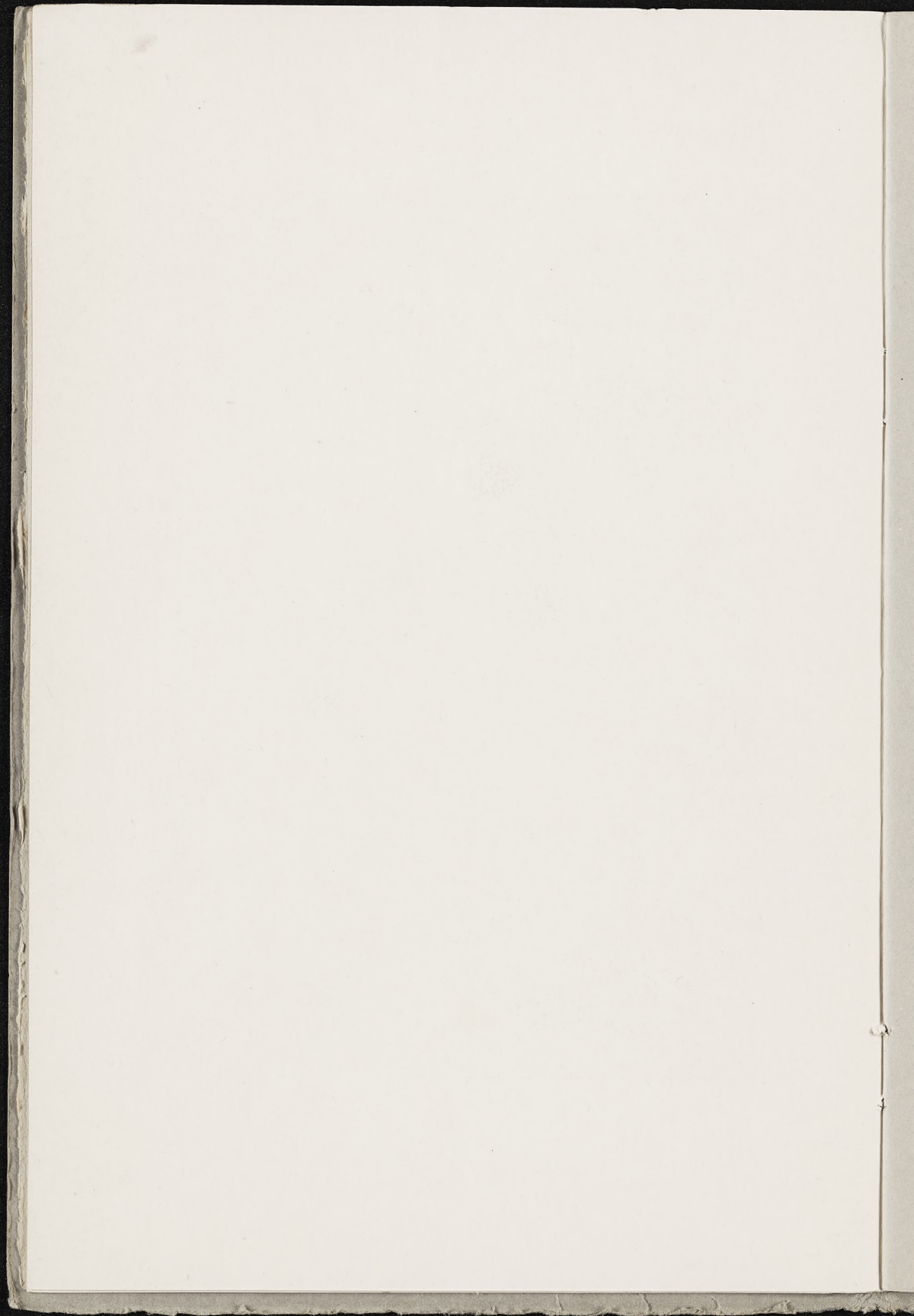
16. Two of the Eight Senyen. Exempt from transmigration for 100,000 years, the original alchemists, they spent their time concocting an elixir vitae. Copied in the temple of Ju-sam-do second year of Koka (about 1835). This is also in the Chinese cloud style of brush stroke.

17. The Paintings of Birds and Flowers.

These paintings are worthy of attention though they give but partial indication of the mystic quality with which the Oriental artist is able to imbue such subjects. No Occidental artist has succeeded in painting



THE SLEEPING BOY, by Itcho, Japan's greatest humorist. This example illustrates his dash and vigor as well as his drollery.



flowers as if possessed of a spiritual consciousness, as have the master artists of the Orient.

18. A Boy Pointing.

Note the charm of the free hand drawing and the spirit of childhood depicted by this rapid sketch. The brush stroke used is known as the "Koto string line," a fine line of uniform roundness from start to finish.

19. After a Rain.

20. Snow in the Mountains. Two frequently portrayed sages carrying fuel.

21. A Girl with an Umbrella. An original painting of more recent times. An interesting color study.

JAPANESE PRINTS

"Michael Angelo and Velasquez, however huge their strength in portraiture and decoration, however sublime Veronese and Tintoretto in magnificent display of color, we must perforce admit to Oriental art a refinement of thought and a delicacy of handicraft, the outcome of the original thought, which never was attained by Italy, and which so transcends our grosser sense that it must forever remain only half perceived and understood by us." George Moore—"Some Japanese Prints."

Japanese prints are wood engravings in color. The design was engraved in relief on a wood block, usually of cherry, known as the key block. Prior to 1743 the impression from the key block was colored by hand and these prints are known as the Primitives. The first pigment used in coloring prints was tan (red lead). Then followed in order beni—a red extracted from saffron—a greenish yellow a thin lacquer (urushi) and a blue extracted from Chinese cotton. After 1743 blocks were made for each color and were applied to the paper by hand. A print is therefore the work of three craftsmen—the artist, the engraver, and the printer.

Too much stress is used by commentators on the perfection of register—the exact color block alignment—but I have observed that in the most notable eastern exhibits in which the leading collectors have united the pick of their possessions, more than half of the prints showed imperfect registration. The printers often, in fact, depended on imperfect register for some of their designed effects.

The faces of the figure prints are frequently described as a mere formula, void of expression. As "mere formula" they are in perfect harmony with the flowing drapery of the figures. To say, however, that the faces are void of expression is to miss one of the subtle diversions intimacy with their world yields. The formula serves to portray the habit of emotional control of the Japanese, but not to the extent of obliterating the expression, for the faces plainly show sorrow, meditation, love, observation

or the look of listening. In the faces of Sukenobu and Harunobu the innocence and immaturity of youth are plainly seen, while in the faces of Kiyinaga and Utamaro the sweetness and dignity of mature womanhood are not excelled in the whole range of portraiture. In Hokusai's work the facial types of peasant, noble, sage, warrior and of all states of the mind may be found. All who are familiar with the prints know the artists from their special type of face—only the inferior artists show the mute, vacant stare. Our own caricaturists often use a mere formula for their faces, but what a range of expression they represent.

THE UKIYO-YE ARTISTS

Matahei (1578-1650) is credited with the "discovery" of a new world as subject matter for art presentation—the commonplace happenings of everyday life, known as the popular school or Ukiyo-ye, a word of Buddhistic origin signifying the under or vulgar world, or the evanescent—"the Floating World." It corresponds with the Dutch Genre school both as to time or theme, denoting merely a coincidence or evidence of the growth of the world consciousness.

The Ukiyo-ye school owes its impetus to Hishikawa Moronobu who is credited with having brought wood engravings to a high state of perfection. He was born about 1625 and was a painter of distinction. His initiation in the popular school was as a book illustrator, his first publication appearing in 1659, followed by hand-colored prints about 1670.

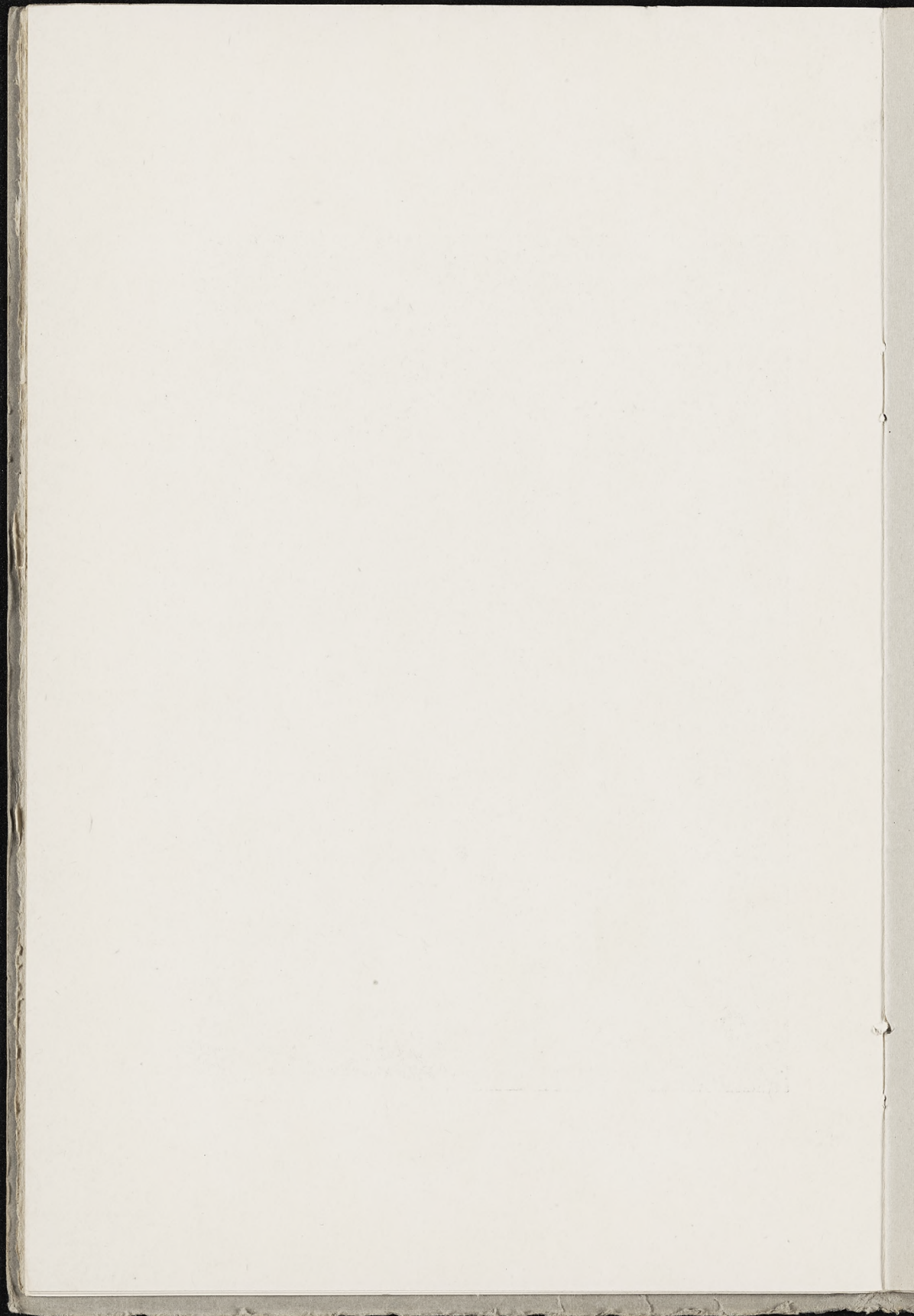
Following Moronobu the names of the most conspicuous among the early illustrators and print makers are Itcho (1651-1724), Korin (1660-1716), Kiyonobu (1664-1755), Morikuni (1670-1748), Sukenobu (1677-1711), Kiyomasu (1679-1762), Okumura Masanobu (1685-1764), Shigenaga (1697-1756), Kaigetsudo (1700-), Toyonobu (1710-1785), Kiyomitsu (1735-1785). All of these artists are represented in this collection. Their prints are known as the Primitives.

The Primitives are of extreme rarity. Their makers—the pioneers of the popular school—while giving evidence of a rudimentary art breathe the fresh and invigorating air of untrodden fields. Their prints are notable for "stylistic skill," all are of a marked individuality and the brush work gives a delightful effect of rhythmic, measured motion.

Korin was the most original of the great designers of Japan. He possessed a power of conventionalizing nature forms, which is unequalled. Several French critics distinguish him as the world's greatest decorator, and there are those who denounce him as a charlatan. At first sight the latter impression is sure to hold, but familiarity with the many volumes of reproductions of his work inevitably convinces one of his rare origi-



THE PICNIC, MUSIC AND DANCING, by Kiyomitsu. This artist has the distinction of first employing three blocks. This is an excellent example of his style.



nalities and genius. Throughout Ukiyo-ye his designs may be seen as patterns in the draperies.

Itcho is Japan's greatest humorist. His mirth-making proclivities were rewarded by several years of banishment. The example of his work reproduced herein illustrates his dash and vigor as well as his drollery.

Sukenobu's specialty was young womanhood. He was the first to represent this period of immaturity and innocence with its according refinement of occupation and pastime. He was evidently Harunobu's inspiration, as it is often hard to distinguish their work.

Kiyomitsu has the distinction of first employing three blocks instead of two, thereby increasing the range of color combinations. A rare example of his style and brush movement is reproduced.

After these, follow the master Ukiyo-ye artists with a larger palette using opaque and mixed colors, employing gaufrage—impressing the print without color—inventing means of perfecting the register, and the use of an improved quality of paper. "The Four Lords of the Art" of this period, as Fenellosa calls them, were Harunobu, Shunsho, Toyoharu and Shigemasa, all of whom are represented in this collection. Toyoharu is rarely seen in any exhibition. His work is notable for the handling of crowds and for linear perspective. Harunobu was the first elaborator of color, using at first but two blocks, an example of which is in the exhibit. Then followed his employment of five or six blocks and finally ten or more, known as Nishiki-ye, i.e., brocade pictures. His most famous print, here reproduced, is one of the greatest of Ukiyo-ye. The subject is Gompachi, the ronin lover of Komuraski, the characters of a love story familiar to all Japanese. The majestic dignity of the figure, the falling of the drapery in simple rhythmic folds is remindful of a Greek statue.

Shunsho's prints are chiefly of actors and are highly esteemed by collectors by reason of their statuesque pose and simple but original coloring.

Shigemasa is generally referred to as a famous calligrapher and draftsman, notable for his drawing of draperies. He recalls the German art critic, Muther's, statement that the Japanese artist is the greatest draftsman of the world.

These four men were the inspiration of Kiyonaga, whose work excels all the masters of Ukiyo-ye, in the classic dignity of his figures, in the superb grace of his women and in the supreme quality of his brush stroke. The Art Institute of Chicago possesses in the collection of the late Clarence Buckingham the greatest assembly of Kiyonagas in the world.

Koriusai, also of this period (the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth) stands second to Harunobu and Kiyonaga in designing power, and first as the artist of kakemono-ye, or pillar prints.

In this field he is a reminder of the sonneteer, for his pillar prints are also "the complete development of a single motive" confined to prescribed limits,

"A wave of melody
From heaving waters of the impassioned soul."

Of this period and also extending into the middle of the nineteenth century are Toyohiro, Toyokuni, Utamaro, Hokusai, Hokujei, Eishi, Yeizan, Yeisen, Hiroshige, Kunisada, Kuniyoshi and their line of pupils or followers. All have bequeathed to the world prints of notable distinction, individual in style, composition and color.

Of Hokusai (1760-1849) it is difficult to write. His protean genius is one of the world's phenomena. There has been an attempt of late, among collectors under the spell of Kiyonaga or Sharaku, to disparage this master, whose work opened the eye of the western world to the art of the east; but print collectors are not always safe guides. Rarity is apt to be the summum bonum and there are many shifts of the wind of opinion. All great artists, and the minor artists as well, contribute to the world's art movement, and critics do not always maintain the continuity of the movement or bear in mind what is "differently excellent." Hokusai's output—book illustrations, prints and paintings—is not equaled in number by that of any artist of any nation. He repeats the style and mood of every great artist of the popular school and he has, also, an individual style which stamps his work with genius. With Hiroshige he is the greatest of the landscape artists of Ukiyo-ye, but in comparison with Hiroshige his landscapes have a spell, not mere mannerism, an effect indescribable which leaks through words. His eye was a devouring element; nothing visual escaped it. His studies of the human body in action (he for example, represented thirty different postures of a dancer without showing the head), could illustrate the talks of Rodin. His portrayal of moods from the humorous and grotesque to those of refined sentiment and unbridled passion it would be difficult to parallel. Some say he was an illiterate, but the quality of his wit, notable in his *surimono*s, and his rare ability to use terse, marvelously expressive language, repeatedly quoted by a host of writers, and ever impressive in its appeal, prove the contrary. He was cynic, mystic, realist, idealist, wit, sage, poet, man-of-the-world and a favorite of the men of letters of his time. He might well be called the Balzac of Ukiyo-ye. John La Farge ranks Hokusai with Michael Angelo, Raphael, Valesquez, Rembrandt, Titian and Durer, saying "The amazing directness and accuracy of his art, the largeness of his view, and the intense human interest with which he invests it, entitle him to his place of honor beside the giants." Up to his last day, when ninety, his

passion for art, undiminished, moved him to say, "If the gods had given me ten years more I could have been a great painter; then every dot and line would have meaning and express life."

Utamaro (1754-1806) has the distinction of having been introduced to the western world by a book from the pen of the fastidious French critic and eminent writer, M. de Goncourt. It is told that a famous dress designer of Paris paid \$5,000.00 for Utamaro's "Korean Ambassadors." He is considered by many the pre-eminent artist of feminine figures. The majority, however, rank him second to Kiyonaga in this field. His women are invested with the element of romantic charm, depicted in pensive attitudes, suggestive of a hidden sorrow or as if listening to distant music, and all as flowers without blemish growing out of the mire. Utamaro's subjects are of the Yoshiwara and the tea-house, and it may be that his dissipated life and his great popularity, combined to make of him during the closing years of his life a degenerate, and to plant the seeds of decay in his work. George Moore in an essay under the heading "Some Japanese Prints" has this to say, "Ladies under Trees, by Utamaro! That gray-green design, alternated with pale yellow corresponds more nearly to a sonata by Mozart than anything else; both are fine decorations, expressing nothing more definite than that sense of beauty that haunts the world. The fields give flowers and the hands of man works of art." In the descriptive writings on the subject of these old prints there are frequent references to Mozart, Beethoven or Bach.

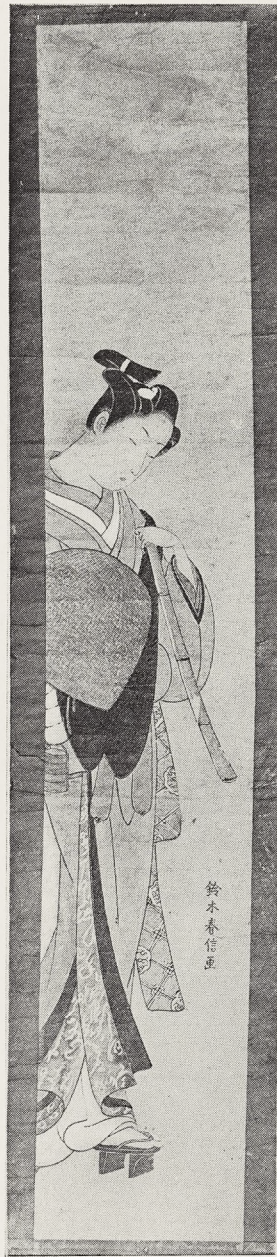
Yeishi, one of the masters of the popular school, whose work also is compared to Kiyonaga, was a graduate of the Kano school of art. Hayashi states that the name Yeishi was bestowed upon him by the tenth Shogun in token of his rank as a painter in this aristocratic academy of art. That he entered the despised school of Ukiyo-ye and at the cost of his social standing is evidence of an insurgent movement in the art circles of his time. Yeishi's figure prints, almost exclusively of women, are valued for their queenly grace of expression and carriage. The Kano school which considered him a renegade, can hardly show a more exclusive or aristocratic world than his prints reveal. The Ukiyo-ye artists in their portrayal of the feminine world seem to have practiced the secret of the old masters who studied the willow and the cherry blossom that they might give to womanhood her grace of movement and flower-like nature.

Toyokuni, one of the most prolific and popular artists of his time, was the greatest pupil of Toyoharu. He has, seemingly, all the styles of his immediate predecessors. Many of his prints would deceive a lover of the superlative Kiyonaga, and there are not a few that plainly mark the

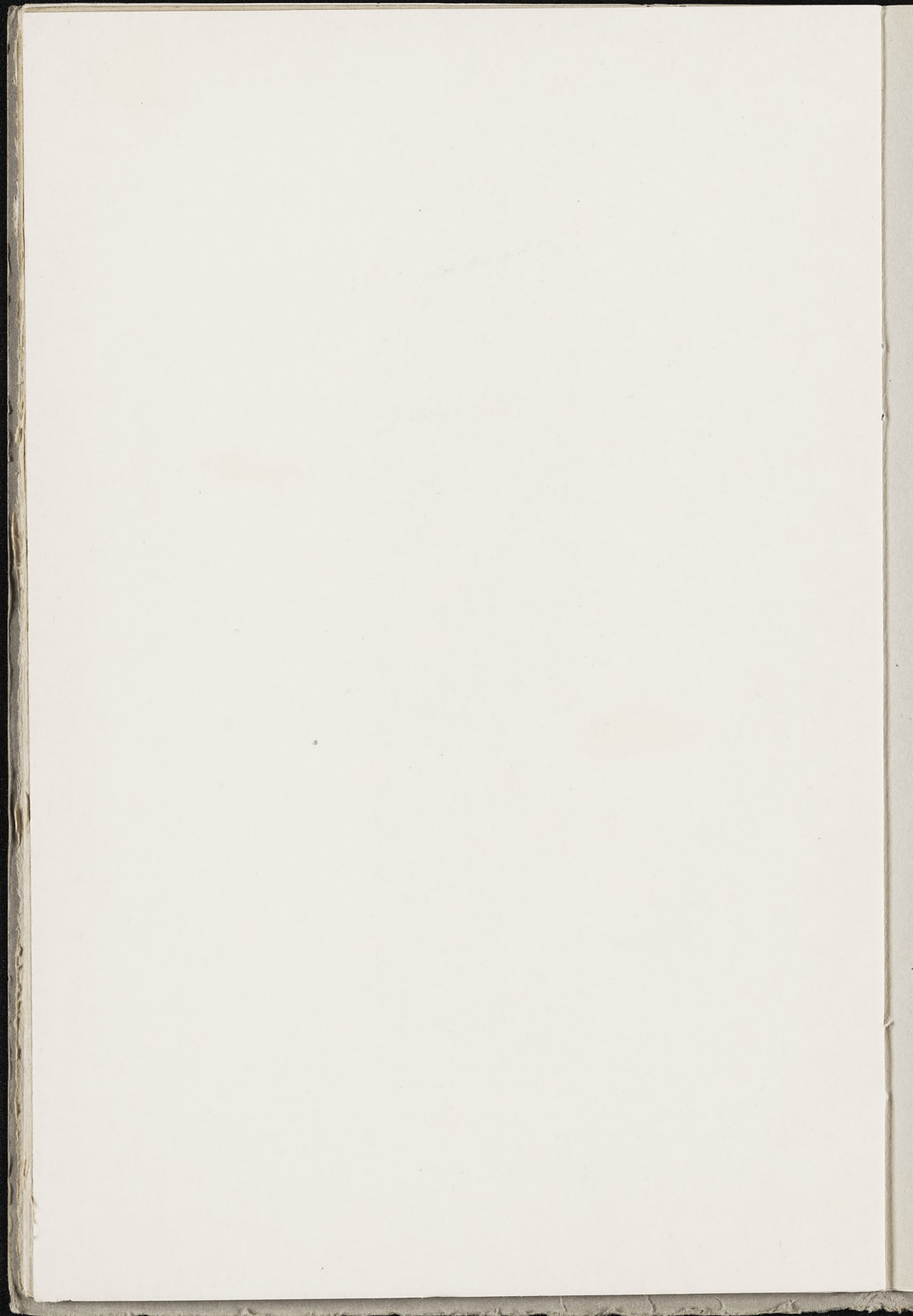
period of degeneration which set in with the run-away market of demand and the introduction of aniline dye.

Sharaku prints are in great demand at present. He is described as "a genius of a high order," but his harp has but one string. All his production was confined to one or two years and those were years of failure, for his prints found no market. They are all eccentric, mere strays of a grotesque mood, and almost reproductions of certain prints of Toyokuni. His posthumous fame is due to a singular circumstance—several years ago Parisian art circles were discussing, with their customary fervor, the boundary lines of the world beautiful, one party contending for a fastidious limitation, the other not only for a wider, but a sphere without boundary lines. The latter held that even ugliness had its claims. Rodin entered the lists with his *Burghers of Calais* and the *Man with the Broken Nose*, and during the discussion it happened that a print by Sharaku was passed around as contributing evidence. From that time there began a still hunt for Sharakus. Since that high argument how wide has become the sphere of beauty. Pioneers are now revealing its residence in marsh and desert and even in the smoke-clouded atmosphere of rolling mills and switchyards.

Interest in Hiroshige (1796-1858) is today gathering momentum. It may be claimed that he is nature's greatest dramatist. He has written the play of the mind of nature in toto as has the artist of no other land or time—its ever-changing temperament, its quietude and passions, its lover-like intimacies, as well as its vast aloofness. His stage is impressive with space, distance, atmosphere and aerial perspective. The break of day with its beginning activities, the evening time of recreation, the uncanny midnight hour ("The Gathering under the Stars of the Torch-bearing Foxes"), the seasonal changes, the tempestuous rain with its intermittent blasts ("The Storm on the Tokaido"), the heavy downpour ("On the Sumida Bridge"), the rains' diagonals and sudden showers are all told with dramatic verity. The beauty of falling snow and the impressive hush of the snow-mantled world, the humorous sport of the wind as well as its reckless violence, all fall under the magic of his brush. All the Japan of his time may be seen passing before us—its city and country activities, the Tokaido (the imperial highway between the capitals of the Mikado and the Shogun), and its fifty-three stations are made familiar in several series. These show not only the scenery but the travelers en route—the feudal lord with his retainers in procession, shrine-visiting pilgrims, the postman speeding by, farmers in the rice field, ferrymen bargaining with travelers, the fording and wading of rivers and at all times of the day and night, through rain and snow storm. The towns and scenery of the sixty-nine provinces, their mountains and valleys, their rivers, lakes



THE RONIN LOVER, GOMPACHI, by Harunobu. Some claim this to be Harunobu's greatest work, the majestic dignity of the figure, the falling of the drapery in simple folds is remindful of a Greek statue. It is also suggestive of the intellectual calm of the statues of Buddha.



and inland seas, and Japan's unique collection of peninsulas and wave-sculptured sea cliffs are shown in prints numbered by the thousand.

The reputation of Hiroshige both in Europe and America is growing. There is today a constantly increasing library of books and essays referring to his influence and commenting on his work. Whistler acknowledged his indebtedness to Hiroshige and likewise have several of the French Impressionists. Jongkind has been called the European Hiroshige. There are not a few American artists who study Hiroshige's work. W. H. Wright in "Modern Painting," one of the most stimulating art books of our time, in comparing Claude Monet and Hiroshige says, "The European has achieved a living light while the Oriental has presented a more lucid and intensive vision."

In 1858, at the age of sixty-two, warned of the end of his days, he wrote, according to the Japanese custom, a farewell poem,

"Dropping my brush at Azuma

I go the long journey to the Western Land

To behold the wonderful scenery there."

There are countless prints on the market signed Toyokuni, Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, etc., representative of the decadence. Prints worthy of the popular school are to be found among them but they are as scarce as pearls in the waters of the Mississippi.

THE VALUE OF PRINTS IN AWAKENING APPRECIATION OF OUR OWN ART

The first impression of the majority of those unfamiliar with Japanese prints is one of amusement—they seem mere grotesqueries, whimsical performances, the art play of an unsophisticated and primitive people. This is especially true of the figure prints which have little resemblance to real persons. But with intimacy they slowly but surely grow in esteem and finally they may exercise a power over the brain and the imagination, which few things curious in design or possessing skill in the making, that record the past, can do.

Indeed there is no limit to the enthusiasm these time-mellowed and worm-eaten sheets may arouse, even to becoming a kind of inebriacy, which happily no sumptuary laws can reach. The two books by Dora Amsden of California are a notable expression of the felicity their mystic spell has power to evoke, and the singularity of the phenomenon is that Ukiyo-ye especially hits the hard-headed business man, for among the collectors I have met, and others, are three well-known bankers, two railroad presidents, the managing director of one of the largest corporations of the

world, two brothers whose annual income from their business would class them as millionaires, two well-known newspaper editors, two architects of international reputation, two noted corporation lawyers, and an eminent surgeon, all leaders in practical affairs. This is explained by the need to escape from this speed-mad, sensation-craving, over-draft-drawing world, making a place of refuge, necessary to one's wellbeing. The old prints afford such a retreat, for they reveal another world as remote as it is possible to conceive, a world of Utopian charm, peopled by a race wholly of the imagination, and yet a world of a higher reality than if untouched by the wand of art.

ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE PRINTS

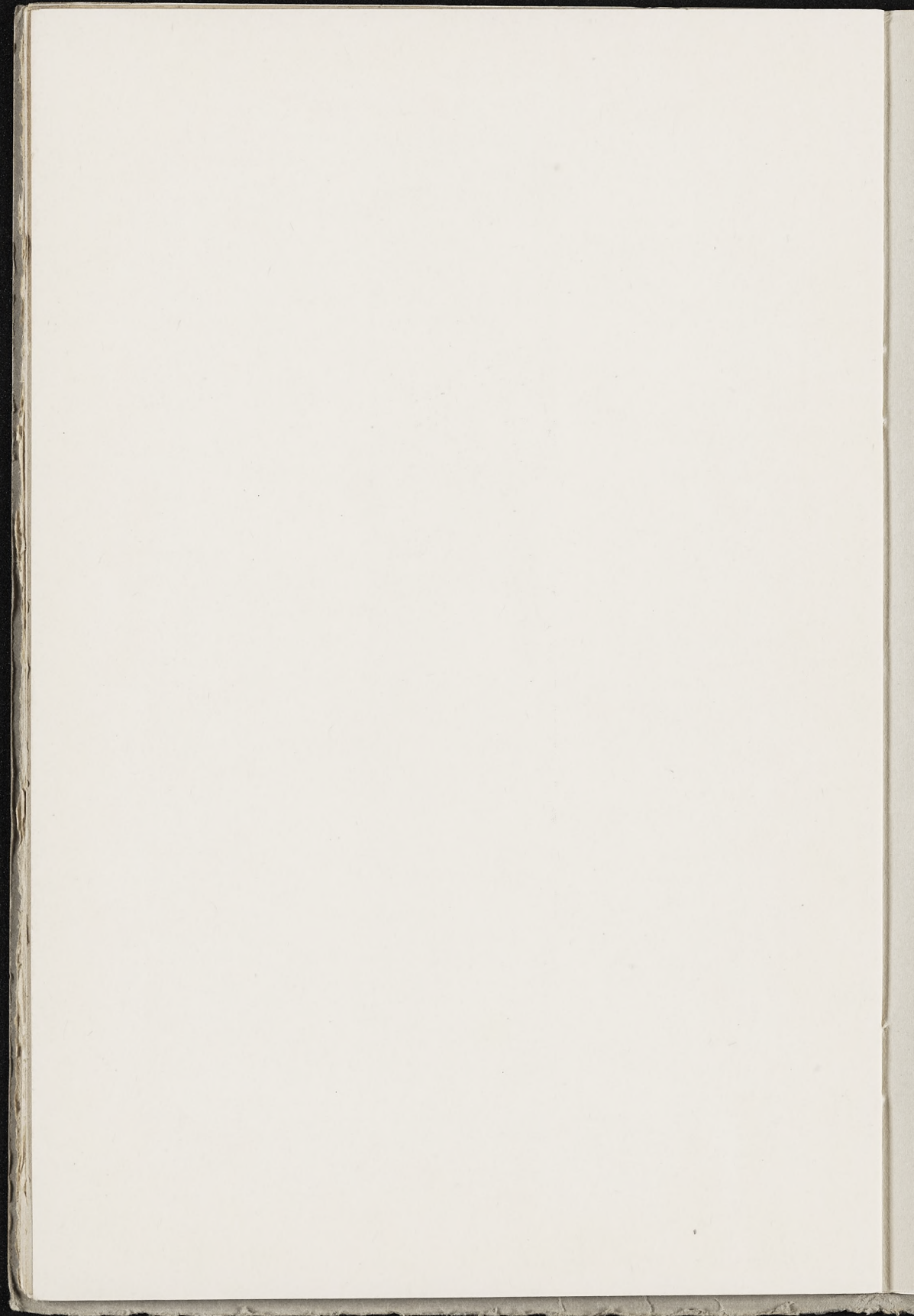
It is not necessary to venture far into this alien world of prints to realize that their makers were not of an unsophisticated or immature race. On the contrary we soon learn that their craft is the final outcome of twelve hundred years of art evolution and that it is permeated with the poetry and philosophy of races profoundly meditative and contemplative. The prints are saturated with the lore of India, China and Japan. The philosophy of the Orient, admittedly more profound than that of the Occident, has been a working philosophy which has influenced even the masses, as the prints bear evidence. This philosophy is not only revealed in their graphic arts but it is cast and embroidered, carved and lacquered in their utensils, garments and household furnishings.

The expression of this philosophy is found even in the pattern or design of the picture, regardless of the subject. For example, "The Flying Geese," by Korin, reproduced in this catalogue, suggests the "Adwaita idea," the Buddhist conception of the universe—the whole in every detail, every object an epitome of the universe. In this print each bird in flight is an epitome of the whole design—the single bird repeating the form of the land and sea. It is also duplicated by the formation of the flock, and in the outline of the spaces. The Rhythm of the Universe is a ruling conception in Oriental thought—the recurring day and night, the return of the seasons, the movements of planets and stars. The letter S, the norm of beauty in Japanese art, is a symbolic conception of rhythm. This symbol may be noted in the majority of prints, either as detail or in the structure of the composition. A print by Koriūsai, "The Reading of the Letter," is given here as illustration.

As aids to the understanding and appreciation of the aim and work of our own artists, the prints are invaluable. Their value lies in the fact that we do not know what they are all about; we do not understand their language or meaning, hence lacking a libretto we are impelled to concentrate on the score—thereby saving our souls from over-absorption in the



THE READING OF THE LETTER, by Koriūsai, illustrating the conception of rhythm. The letter S—the norm of beauty in Japanese art—is symbolic of rhythm.



subject as subject—the blue devil of every artist who strives to deliver a special message of his own. The Oriental artists meet the “vice of subject” by the whole fraternity uniting on the same themes. In other words, the subject is provided. For example: the rhythm and movement in nature, the floating of draperies, the flight of birds, the wind stirring in the autumn grass, the flowing of the river, the force of the breaking wave, the pine and bamboo bending under the rain or with their mantle of snow, the floating of the mists among the mountains, etc.

There are also topical subjects provided, “The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove,” “Shoki, the Demon Queller,” “The Eight Views of Biwa,” “The Thirty-six Views of Fuji,” “The Forty-seven Ronin,” “The Tiger in the Bamboo Jungle,” etc., etc., inciting the artist to individual expression of the common theme. The “subject” cannot be copyrighted in the Orient; it is as nothing—the aesthetic scholarship of the artist, his technical skill with the brush, the range of his imagination, his suggestive faculty, are everything.

THE PRINTS DELIBERATELY AVOID THE IMITATION OF NATURE

An exhibit of the old prints is also invaluable for the simple reason that they are not attempts to fac-simile nature, or to contend with the camera in its field. Any trained artist can do marvelous copy work; he can imitate marble, wood, silk or leather, or accurately topograph scenery, or paint a photograph-like portrait. This is potboiling. All Oriental art criticism is a lighthouse-guarded coast warning artists of the rocks and sandbars of mere imitation. This has, for many centuries, been one of the cardinal principles of aesthetic teaching in the Orient. One famous Chinese critic of the Sung dynasty expresses it thus: “He who values a picture for its resemblance has a critical faculty near that of a child. Art produces something beyond the form of things.” The Japanese reserve their powers of imitation, which are incredibly marvelous, for children’s books, carving and metal work. But the prints—and herein is lodged their benign influence in opening the door to real art appreciation—are one remove from the superficial look of things, and, momentarily relieved from the outward semblance of the body visible, we are able to dwell on its inward significance—the essence of the subject, its nature, its mood, as well as the artist’s personal equipment for extracting this essence—the range of his imagination, the beauty or truth of his revelation.

In viewing the prints or the work of our artists with these considerations in our minds, art visualization becomes a subtle and complex act, exercising our higher faculties and incidentally revealing to the mind the

high place of honor Art holds in the world's esteem regardless of the neglect it suffers.

ART'S SERVICE IN REVEALING THE HIGHER TRUTH

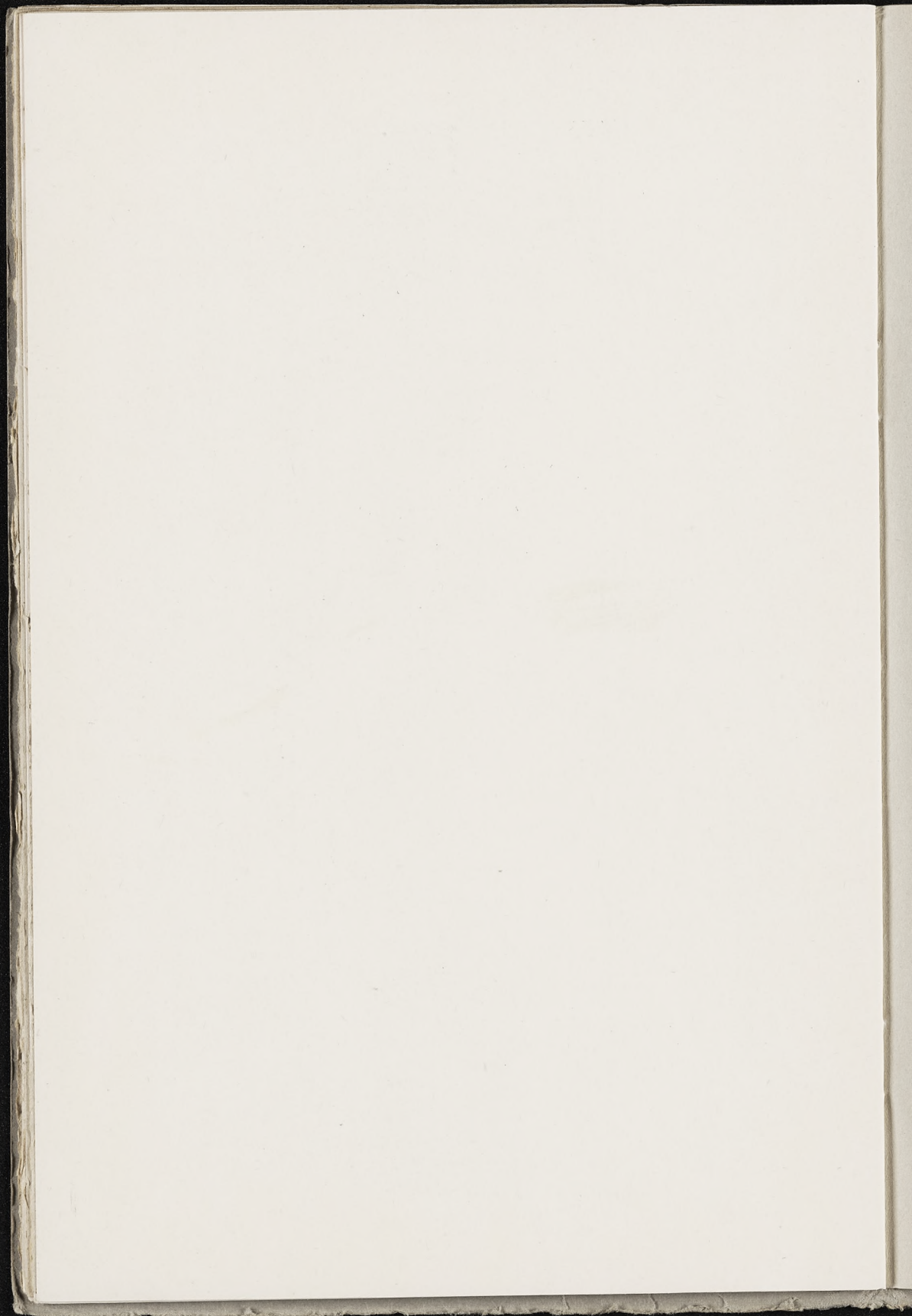
But the "eminently practical man" for whose opinion our day and generation have so great a respect is sure to say "These prints do not speak the truth. They picture an idyllic Japan which never existed. These stately, statuesque figures are more suggestive of a race of high-born lords and ladies than of the Japanese as we know them. I want facts." Which, by the way, is said with the same cutting words of the whole imagining and idealizing life which all indulge in, as rue or restoral from contact with the facts of our too engrossing, materialistic world. These prints picture the world as the mother sees, viewing with adoring eyes her child, or the lovers of the world burning incense. So likewise in the prints "Thoughts do but tenderly touch the scene." The figure prints have often been called "aesthetic abstractions"—which term intimates a more all-inclusive world of beauty than that of the mother or lover world, a world that delivers us from our conventional judgments of the varied human type, which differentiates into comparisons of "ugly," "plain," "ordinary," "handsome," "pretty" or "beautiful." The figure prints introduce us to that larger conception expressed in terms of art by Shakespeare, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world." We realize this is not panegyric but all encompassing truth.

THE PRINTS EXERCISE THE IMAGINATION

Furthermore, the influence of the old prints, in common with all art, lures one to exercise the imagination—the creative faculty. In the Harunobu group of the exhibit are three pillar prints placed together to illustrate Harunobu's fidelity to the Oriental theory that every picture should be suggestive, should give intimation of ideas or scenes not literally or wholly visible. The Japanese artist has learned the secret power of the understatement or of the illusive, imparting an intangible or spiritual quality to his theme, revealing the mystics' world of infinitudes. Thus he deliberately sets out to send the observer of his work on far excursions of conjecture. The first print represents a girl carrying a cup, her head turning to listen to the Uguisu, the so-called Japanese nightingale, and in the far distance is a temple intimating that the bird is reminding her of the Buddhist confession of faith, "Ho-ke-kyo" which the Japanese imagine



A DAIMYO PROCESSION OF BOYS, ON THE SHORES OF LAKE BIWA, by Hiroshige. The son of a nobleman in the feudal time with the sons of his father's retainers as retinue, celebrating Boy's Day. This is the only horizontal tryptich by Hiroshige known to the owner.



the birds sing, "dwelling with ecstasy upon its golden syllables." The subject of the centre panel—the Ronin lover, Gompachi—is represented in a profound reverie, lost to the world in the object of his adoration. Pictorially it is a symbol of quietude. It suggests the influence of the statues of Buddha, conveying "a sense of the untold dimensions of divine thought and the calm in which it operates." The third pillar print is suggestive of a musical reverie—the lips and the flute are parted, but the inaudible music is still sounding in the mind of the musician. These three are exceedingly simple examples of the law of intimation, for often the Oriental artist invests his subject with attributes beyond our comprehension.

BEAUTY AS OMNIPRESENT

The prints, in pictorially representing the near-at-hand, every-day view of life and nature inculcate the conception of beauty as a Universal Presence—a truth of vital importance, containing the very inmost secret of happiness in life. To reveal this universal presence is the mission of every real artist. Art trains the eye to see; it develops the powers of observation. How few persons are visually conscious, who can say with Gautier "I am one for whom the visible world exists." So complicated has life become, so absorbed are we with its hectic and vociferous demands that the eye ceases to function. Few, indeed, are aware in the remotest degree of nature's daily revelations. Art intelligence is visual intelligence. The work of the artist is, therefore, serious business. Without art, "we move in worlds unrealized."

These old prints are of a day over which night has fallen. The late emperor, a great art patron, when visiting near the end of his reign an exhibit of paintings at Osaka, asked the question why no Japanese paintings were represented. In the chief cities of Japan a common sight in the street is a native topped with an English bowler hat, dressed in a kimono, wearing shoes made in America, and swinging a cane with conscious dignity. In the ancient days farming was considered a higher vocation than merchandising—today the most impressive thing heard throughout Japan is "He made five million yen last year."

In a second-hand book store recently I picked up a book entitled "The Future of Japan." On the first page which happened to open I read these words, "In the orderly evolution of our reasonable and reasoning age it may be that men shall come to honor and love Japan upon the sole fact of her having been the last refuge and repository of the regretted

secret of the unusual, the extraordinary, the original, the phenomenal! There is even a peradventure—and this is a serious thing—that Japan may live in history as the last priestess of the cult of the practice of the true art of living, believers in the graces of life, upholders of the theory of beauty in the midst of commonness.”

Today Japan has been civilized. It is interested in materialistic science, and is in the full tide of the process of losing its soul.

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBIT OF UKIYO-YE—THE DEMOCRATIC ART OF JAPAN

1. The Primitives representing Korin, Itcho, Sukenobu, Moronobu, Kiyomasu, Morokuni, Kwaigetsudo, Kiyomitsu, Masanobu, and others.
2. Harunobu, Koriyasai, Kiyonaga, Yeishi.
3. Choki, Yeiri, Shunsen, Shigenobu, Kiyomitsu II, Kiyomine.
4. Yeizan and three of his pupils.
5. Hokusai, book illustrations and prints.
6. Miscellaneous Landscapes, all rare examples; Toyoharu, Toyohiro, Toyokuni, Shunsen, Shigemasa, Fusitani, Masazumi, Masanobu, Chikushi, Kuniyoshi, Kuniyazu, Sadushide, Yoshitori.
7. Yeisen Landscapes.
8. Miscellaneous Prints of Birds.
9. Surimono—Hokusai, Hokkei, Keisu, Gakutei, Kuniyoshi, Utamaro. These are prints issued by the artists for private circulation, on ceremonial occasions.
10. Toyokuni I; representing his early work.
11. Utamaro.
12. Hiroshige—his work divided as follows:
 - Upright Tokaido series, complete.
 - Snow Scenes.
 - The Mountain.
 - Rain and Wind.
 - River Views.
 - Ferries and Bridges.
 - Night Scenes.
 - Lake, Inland Sea and Breaking Wave.
 - The Four Seasons.
 - Daybreak and Sundown.
 - Birds and Flowers.

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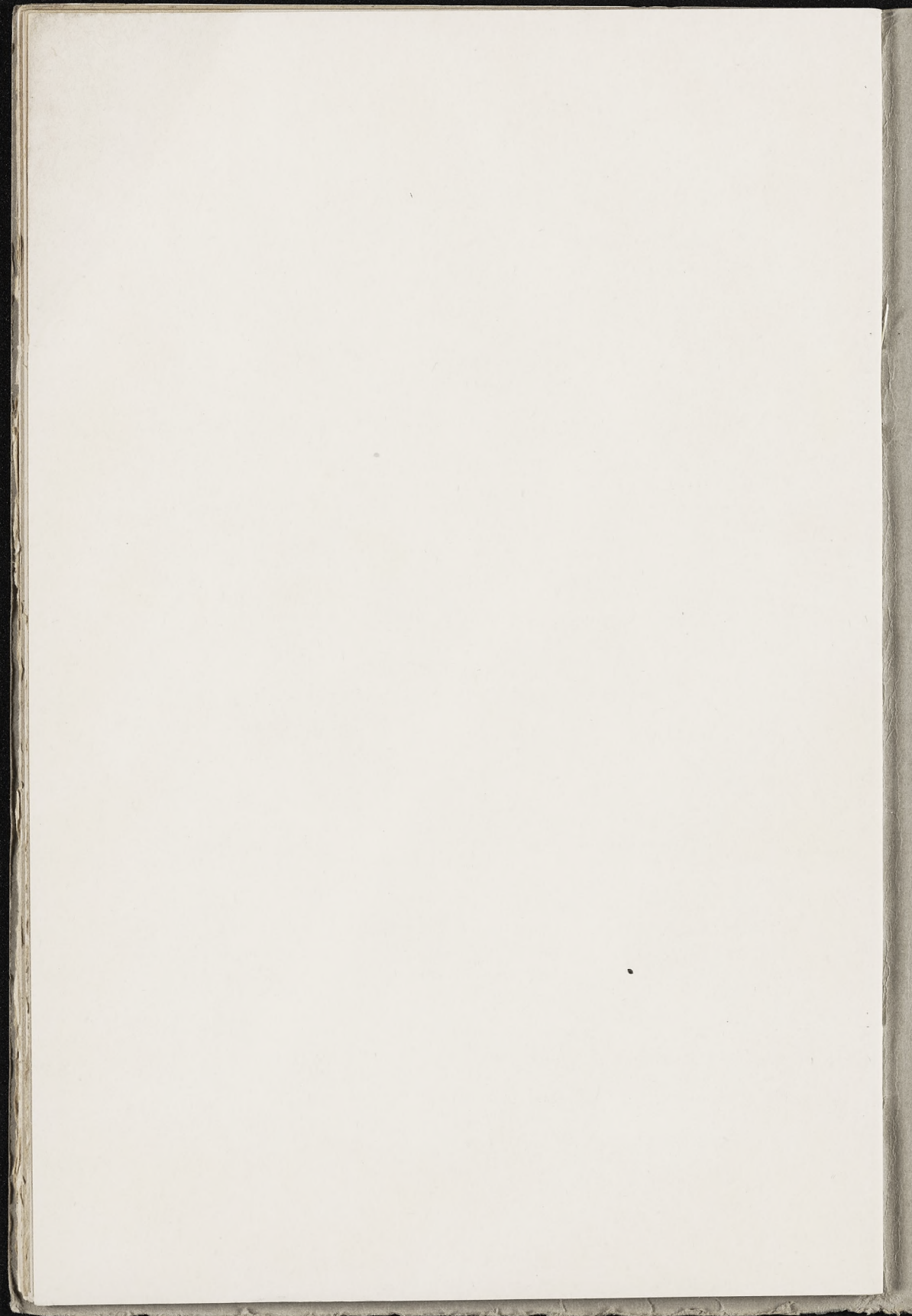
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